

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 19, 2000

LARSON SECURES ADDITIONAL \$1.5 MILLION IN TRANSIT FUNDING FOR HARTFORD IN TRANSPORTATION SPENDING BILL

Money was approved today by House of Representatives

WASHINGTON - A proposed New Britain-Hartford Busway route won a major victory in the House of Representatives today. U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) today announced that he has secured an additional \$1.5 million for a Bus Rapid Transit Initiative. The goal of the initiative is to help alleviate the traffic congestion faced by commuters in and around Hartford.

The funding, approved when the House passed the Transportation Appropriation Act for Fiscal Year 2001 (H.R. 4475), is part of a joint Bus Rapid Transit Initiative between the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Capitol Region Council of Governments and the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency. The Connecticut proposal was selected as one of ten nation-wide demonstration programs. Larson submitted a request for this funding to the Appropriations Committee earlier this year.

"The approval of this money comes at a great time, given the recent funding of the Adriaen's Landing project by the state Legislature. Hartford is indeed a city on the move and it must be prepared for an increase in congestion. Transportation issues are so crucial to the economic viability of cities and towns, that's why I was pleased to do my part to ensure that this money was approved," said Larson.

The Bus Rapid Transit Initiative is intended to improve the speed, reliability and convenience of bus service, to improve mobility, and to promote a healthy environment. The funding is to begin

preliminary engineering for the New Britain-Hartford busway, proposed to be an exclusive roadway through five cities and towns, New Britain, Newington, Farmington, West Hartford and Hartford, and would include approximately ten stations or stops that will service commuters.

This funding builds on Larson's previous success in last year's transportation spending bill, in which he was able to have legislative language included to free nearly \$34 million in federal transit funds for the Hartford region from technical difficulties. This legislative language change has helped city officials and the Capitol Region Council of Governments address the chronic transportation problems that exist in the Hartford area. It also changed the designation of the proposed Griffin Line light rail project, thereby saving the \$993,000 federally earmarked for the program by allowing it to be used to consider other transit options. ###